

## REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated July 18, 2003 (U.S. Patent Office Paper No. 4). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

### Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 1 – 12 and 14 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claim 13 is amended to correct formal errors and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention. In addition, new claims 15 to 19 are hereby submitted for consideration.

### Additional Amendments

The specification is being amended to correct formal errors and to better disclose and describe the features of the present invention as claimed. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

### Formal Objections or Rejections

Claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for being indefinite, in particular, for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have canceled claims 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Therefore, the Examiner's rejection regarding these claims has been rendered moot. Further, Applicants amended claim 13 and believe that the amendment cured all the informalities contained in claim 13. Applicants respectfully ask the Examiner to reconsider the rejection of claim 13.

### Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1 - 5 and 9 -12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Aratani *et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,310,376, (further the ' 376 patent). Applicants have canceled the above referenced claims whereby the Examiner's rejection has been rendered moot.

Claims 6-8 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Aratani *et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,310,676, (further the '676 patent), in view of Ono *et al.* U.S. Patent No. 6,356,331 (further the '331 patent). Again, Applicants have canceled the above referenced claims whereby the Examiner's rejection has been rendered moot.

#### Other matters

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claim 13 if amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejection. Applicants amended the above referenced claim and believe that claim 13, in its amended form, has been cured of all informalities. Therefore Applicants respectfully ask the Examiner to consider the amendment and to indicate the allowability of claim 13, in its amended form.

Applicants newly introduced claims 15 to 19. Support for the matter disclosed by claim 15 can be found in the Specification, in the detailed description of FIGS. 1 and 4 and in the corresponding figures themselves. Support for the matter disclosed by claim 16 and 17 can be found in the Specification, on page 11, lines 14-15. Claims 18 and 19 are dependent from and add features to the claims discussed above. In view of the above arguments, Applicants will contend that all the new claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as those applicable to claim 13, and for reasons contained therein.

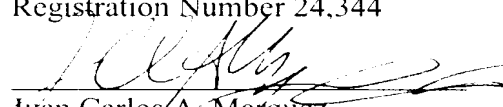
#### CONCLUSION

In view of all the above, Applicants respectfully submit that certain clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. These differences are more than sufficient that the present invention as now claimed would not have been anticipated nor rendered obvious given the prior art. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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**September 3, 2003**